

For Immediate Release
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Additional photos and video available on request

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NC's Own Comes Home!

North Carolina native Rachel Brooker has been casting her choreographic nets in Europe for the past two years, based in Berlin, Germany. This winter she pays a visit home to show what she's experienced. She's holding three events in the Triangle this month:

Thursday, January 24th- 7-10pm- *Invitation*, the US premiere of Brooker's new audience-interactive group piece, at The Scrap Exchange Gallery, 548 Foster Street, Durham, NC, www.scrapexchange.org
Donations will be collected for the Central Asia Institute, an organization building schools in rural Pakistan and Afghanistan, <http://www.ikat.org>
For more on *Invitation* see below.

Friday, January 25th- 4:30 pm- *Dance for Peace* in Chapel Hill
Corner of Franklin and Elliot Streets (near Whole Foods)

Saturday, January 26th- 12:00 pm- *Dance for Peace* in Durham
Corner of Main and Gregson Streets

Dance for Peace is a led dance event on these dates only at the weekly demonstration against the war in Iraq. If you are interested in participating, wear white. Or, just come support the demonstration and enjoy the dance!

Invitation

Invitation is an interactive dance work which opens with the words: "This is an invitation to touch anywhere on exposed skin. You are free to touch, or not to touch. Please enter the space." Dancers arrange and rearrange themselves, offering and withdrawing parts of the body as they compose their invitations to the audience. In the words of reviewer Adam Bliss, "As I moved about the installation, I was struck by the tenderness and intense concentration shared by dancers and touchers alike" (complete article attached). The work reveals, challenges and overcomes personal barriers. Donations collected at the January 24th event will be given to the Central Asia Institute, an organization that crosses national, cultural and religious borders by building schools in rural Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Dance for Peace

Brooker will lead a small group of dancers and anyone else who is interested in joining in a simple but expressive movement exercise at the two peace demonstrations taking place in the Triangle on January 25th and 26th. No dance experience is necessary to participate! Just come wearing white if you'd like to join in. When asked about her motivations for holding these *Dance for Peace* events, Brooker says:

"Around the time of the Iraq invasion, hundreds of people were coming to the weekly demonstrations in Durham, and it was a relief to me to be able to gather with others and express my opposition to the war. The demonstrations have continued without interruption since 2003, but the numbers are tiny now. I know opposition to the war is still out there and growing. I've been living overseas for two years and feel like I've been able to recharge my batteries in that time. So, I'd like to give some of my energy to the peace movement here."

For more information on Brooker's company, Anima Dance, visit www.animadance.org or email brooker.rachel@gmail.com.
Special thanks to The Scrap Exchange for their support.

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Rachel Brooker's Invitation to Touch

Adam B. Collingsworth

Friday, November 30th, 2007

“This is an invitation to touch anywhere on exposed skin. You are free to touch, or not to touch. Please enter the space.” On Friday, November 30th, 2007, choreographer Rachel Brooker presented her dance installation “Invitation” for the 5th time with this direct statement.

Inside of the living/working space Skizum Studios in Berlin, Friedrichshain, Brooker and six other dancers deconstructed the spectators' expectations of art, personal boundaries, and human contact. In an unconventional, interactive performance, the dancers and the participants moved about each other exchanging deliberately elegant movements for touches on exposed skin. In the words of one young woman, “The mood was . . . a little meditative, almost like a church, . . . my awareness was really intensified... it was exciting to be part of the art like that!”

Having worked with Felix Ruckert, Ms. Brooker is not new to interactive dance. However, she stated that his work did not directly influence her piece. As I moved about the installation, I was struck by the tenderness and intense concentration shared by dancers and touchers alike, as well as the many hesitant hands that never seemed to find the right moment or invitation to inspire a caress. The movements themselves varied from intensely intimate to playfully provocative, and as the evening progressed, the lines were blurred with dancers touching each other and spectators, and some spectators taking on the role of dancer and being touched by their non-dancer peers. Aesthetic taste was crucial on both ends in this impelling atmosphere, with an engaging kaleidoscope of mutating invitations to exposed skin and thoughtfully positioned touches.

While some people were challenged by Rachel's uncommon portrayal of human interaction, others found themselves right at home. When asked about the performance, one man said, “Actually, life should be like that. It makes things much easier.”